

### **Who's Paying for Maine's New Prison?**

At present a new prison is being built in Windham, Maine – right next to and on top of the old Maine Correctional Center. True, legislation approved funding for “add-ons” and “improvements”, but not money for a new prison?

Former Governor LePage and former Commissioner Fitzpatrick created real numbers in a manipulative scheme to fool the taxpayers and the Legislators as to the need for such funds - by way of a bait and switch. The details would probably shock the public if they came to light, but the gist is that an “atmosphere of crisis” was created by reflecting overcrowding issues, yet closing the Down East facility – which was the lowest cost per inmate facility and driving up the cost per inmate in other facilities? Yes, nefarious indeed.

My concern is who will pay the cost? Will it be the 85% of the current Department of Corrections population who are addicted or struggling with substance use disorder? Or will it be the 65% of the current population who are struggling with undiagnosed mental health issues? Those who are taxed by the unseen decisions of those who are in power to connive, plot, and scheme without caution or consequence are the ones who pay at present.

But it will be the taxpayer who shoulders the fiduciary burden. The local community will pay for increased traffic and wear on the roads. Yet it will be the citizens of Maine who will pay with their freedoms when the initiative to fill the empty cells comes to account. No matter how you look at it, there is no balance to this equation.

I am concerned that very little thought was given to this plan, lacking transparency, Windham's new prison should be given much consideration.

Warehousing human beings at \$45,000/year - does not address crime.

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